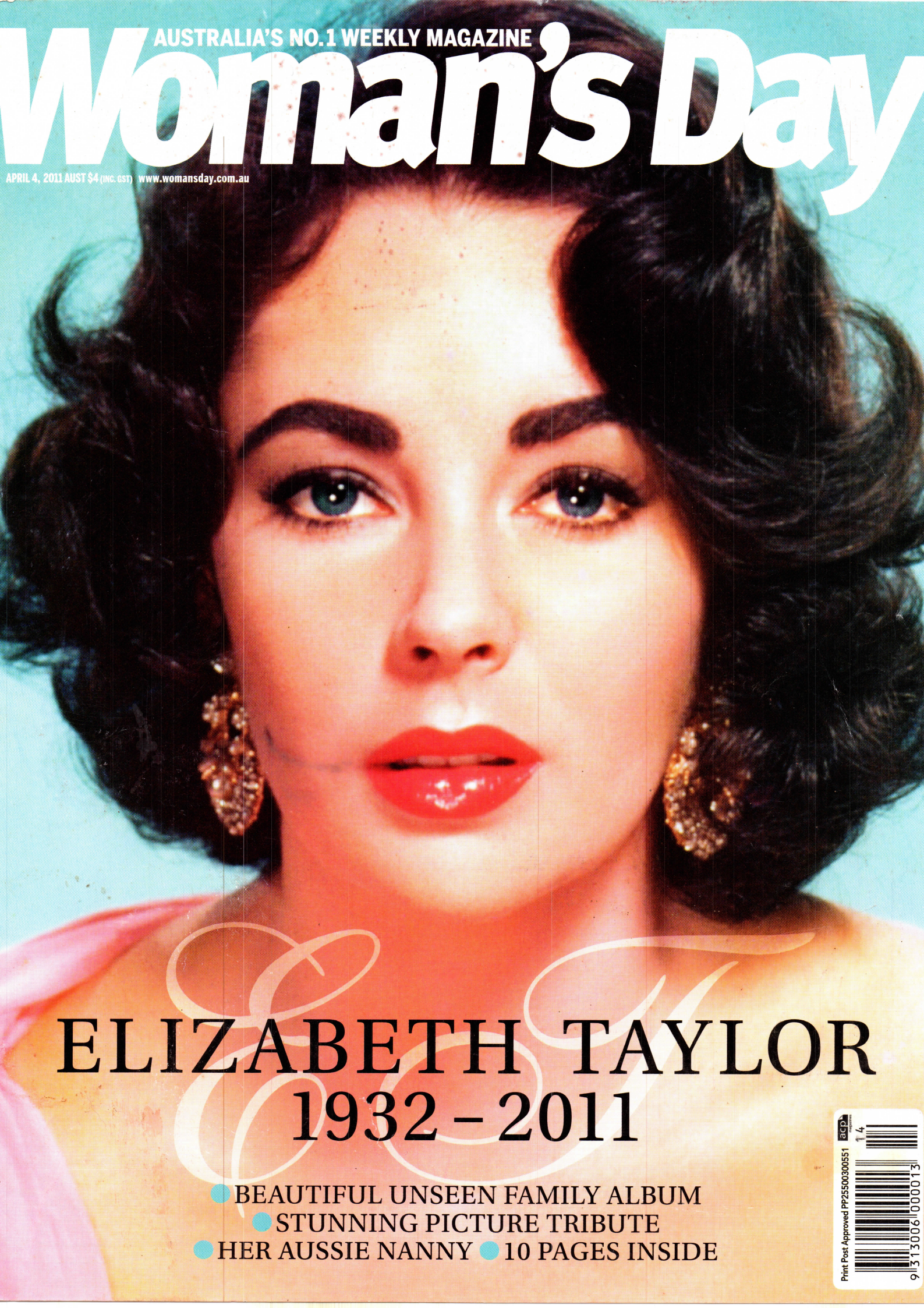


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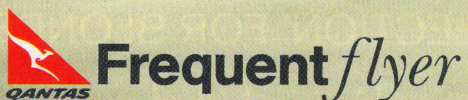


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Elizabeth Taylor

FAREWELL

TO A LEGEND

From her screen roles to her romances, Elizabeth Taylor lived always in the spotlight, writes RAY CHESTERTON

Iconic Elizabeth Taylor, who rode into film legend and into the hearts of millions of people around the world in *National Velvet*, is being rightly farewelled by Hollywood as the last of the superstars of a golden era.

An enchanting, violet-eyed beauty, Elizabeth was a captivating superstar from childhood. She lived her life in full view of an adoring public, who watched in astonishment as she suffered the heartbreak of eight broken marriages, health problems and recurring treatment for substance abuse.

"Her life was a not a private one, but a series of tribulations, serious illnesses, senseless tragedies and lost love," fellow star Paul Newman once said in a moving tribute to Elizabeth before his own death at 83 in 2008.

"What can you say about a legend? On screen her very presence radiated charm."

That charm captivated audiences and attracted suitors in a never-ending procession. But the enduring love affair in her life was with film audiences.

To them she could do no wrong. In their eyes, she was more than just a ravishing beauty: she was an extraordinarily talented actress and they were thrilled when she won two Best Actress Oscars, for *Butterfield 8* (1960) and *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Wolf* (1966) from five nominations in nine years.

Sir Winston Churchill once described her as the film world's "most classic beauty".

She was the personification of the glamour, style and outrageousness that defined Hollywood stardom when she rose to fame. But as the years passed and fellow legends like Katharine Hepburn and close friends Rock Hudson, James Dean and Montgomery Clift died, she became increasingly isolated.

The acclaim and love that radiated from audiences evaporated when she closed the front door of her luxury homes, as marriage after marriage – some driven by love, some by desperation – floundered. Her love life played out like a Hollywood scripted tragedy, except there was no happy ending.

The world wondered how someone with so much talent, money and opportunity could struggle to find someone with whom to share it.

Elizabeth won an Oscar for her 1966 portrayal of the blowsy, drunken, frustrated Martha constantly fighting with and sniping at her college professor husband (Richard Burton) in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*. But many thought her gritty performance was too close to real life, mirroring her often fiery and fractured relationship with Richard.

Elizabeth was always a beauty. At 12 she was already showing the classic good looks that would captivate the world.

Born in England of American parents, she was taken back to the US in 1939, just as World War II was about to begin. Her first film was *There's One Born Every Minute*, made when she was nine. It led to a prominent role in the tear-jerker *Lassie Come Home*, with fellow child star Roddy McDowall, who became a lifelong friend.

The moment that changed Elizabeth's life forever came just three years later when, after strategic campaigning, she won the role of Velvet Brown in *National Velvet* – the story of a young girl who wins the Grand National horse race.

It was the start of an exhilarating career but also led to agonising back pain for the rest of her life after she fell off a horse during filming.

Later in life she would quip, "Some of my best leading men have been dogs and horses." ►

'She was one of the great beauties of the 20th century and I don't think we'll ever see another movie star like her.'

Elizabeth Taylor 1932-2011



*Unseen
pic!*

Posing provocatively on the set of 1956 film *Giant*.



'Not only is she a phenomenal actress, she is also a generous human being who cherishes her friendships.'



Elizabeth was also known for her love of fabulous jewellery.

Making the transition from child star to adult roles, Elizabeth became a superstar and screen goddess with roles in *Giant* with James Dean, *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* with Paul Newman, and *Suddenly Last Summer* with Montgomery Clift. It seemed she could do no wrong... until *Cleopatra*.

Elizabeth was the first actress ever to be paid \$1 million for a role, but the film became a millstone around her neck.

Married to Eddie Fisher at the time, her affair with the also married Richard Burton, who played Marc Antony in the film, caused a sensation. Their passionate and public romance drew world condemnation and the film bombed. But that didn't faze Elizabeth, who was head over heels in love.

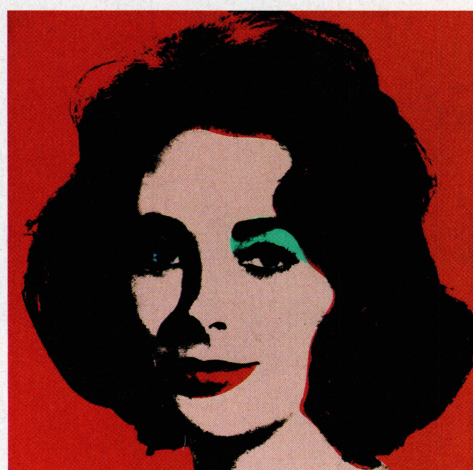
"I really don't remember much about *Cleopatra*. There were a lot of other things going on," she said. "Anyway you find out who your friends are in a scandal."

Elizabeth never backed away from her own code of morality.

"I've only slept with men I've married. How many women can say that?" she queried.

Acknowledging her own sometimes flighty personality and recklessness, she once confided that the strength she always showed in public might have been bravado.

Eccentric US artist Andy Warhol thought Elizabeth typified Hollywood glamour and celebrity. He did a series of 13 paintings of her in the mid 1960s.



"Everything makes me nervous. Except making films," she admitted.

"I'm a survivor. A living example of what people can go through and survive. I've been through it all, baby. I'm mother courage."

Despite her confidence before the cameras, Elizabeth was a bundle of insecurities.

"I don't like my voice. I don't like the way I look. I don't like the way I move. I don't like

the way I act. I mean period. So, you know, I don't like myself."

Fortunately, her fans and fellow actors liked her very much.

"Her husband Mike Todd died when we were filming *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* and she continued working, saying it was therapeutic," co-star Paul Newman remembered. "I was overwhelmed by her professionalism."

Even in her semi-retirement years, the public grabbed any chance to see their beloved star. Her cameo on TV's *General Hospital* drew a record audience of 16 million. Her last appearance was in 1994 in *The Flintstones*.

"She was truly an American icon," says Chris Dodd, chairman of the Motion Picture Association of America. "Her talent endured the test of time and transcended generations of movie-goers."

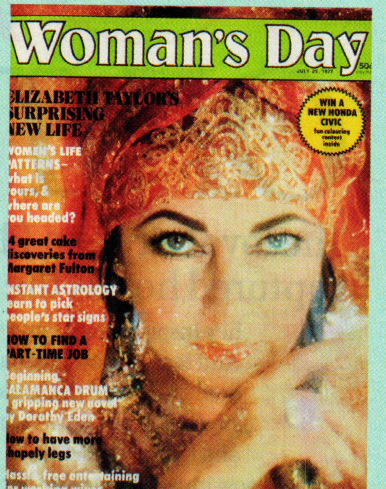
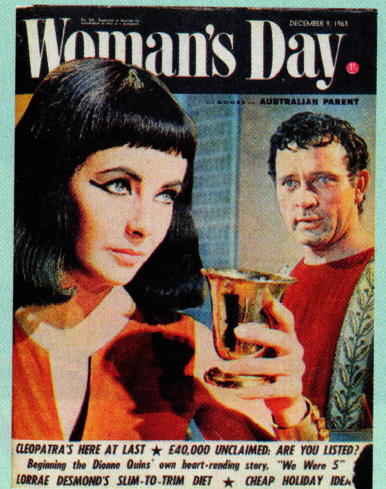
Close friends praised the loyalty and compassion of the warm-hearted star.

She was a close friend of actor Rock Hudson, the first high-profile Hollywood victim of AIDS, and became a HIV/AIDS campaigner.

She also a publicly supported Michael Jackson through his court cases, and one of her last appearances was at his funeral.



In *Suddenly, Last Summer*, a 1959 film that touched on a number of taboo subjects.



In 1985, the actress was awarded with the Cecil B. DeMille Golden Globe for Lifetime Achievement, to add to her three Oscars.



"I don't think people knew how much we loved each other," Elizabeth said of Michael. "We both had terrible childhoods."

Stars were unstinting in their praise of Elizabeth's work and compassion.

"Not only is she a phenomenal actress, she is also a generous human being and one who cherishes and works at her friendships," said Paul Newman. "She is someone I am extremely proud to know."

J. D. Heyman, editor of *People* magazine, says, "Elizabeth Taylor may have been the greatest movie star Hollywood ever produced."

"She was one of the great beauties of the 20th century and I don't think we'll ever see another movie star like her."

Elizabeth herself was a little more modest. Asked in 1999 what she wanted to see on her gravestone, she said, "Here lies Elizabeth. She hated being called Liz. But she lived."

[View our picture gallery](#)

See Elizabeth Taylor's life in pictures as we pay tribute to the screen icon at...

www.womansday.com.au

Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor were the idols of lovers around the world for decades. Next page: It all began on the set of *Cleopatra* in 1960.



The love story OF THE CENTURY

The love between Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton captured hearts the world over, writes GLEN WILLIAMS

They inspired lovers everywhere. And her sad passing marks the final chapter in the great love story that was Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

It's almost impossible to say her name without instantly linking it to Richard Burton's. They had a love that burned with undeniable fire and intensity.

A reflective Elizabeth summed up their union best when she simply said, "Maybe we loved each other too much."

The two met on the epic motion picture *Cleopatra* in 1960. When the stunningly beautiful Elizabeth signed a million-dollar contract to play the title role, she became the highest paid actress in the world, and *Cleopatra* would become the most expensive movie ever made at the time.

With Elizabeth as Cleopatra and Richard as Mark Antony, their romance, like their

characters, would make history. Antony and Cleopatra, Taylor and Burton – they went hand-in-hand. The attraction was instant.

"The first day we worked together he had a hangover and was looking so vulnerable," said Elizabeth, recalling meeting Richard for the first time. "He was trying to drink a cup of coffee and his hand was shaking, so I held the cup to his lips. Our eyes locked. He drank the whole cup and we kept looking at each other.

"Richard was magnificent in every sense of the word. From those first moments in Rome [on the set of *Cleopatra*], we were always madly and powerfully in love."

Their passion lit up the screen, and off screen the two were crazy for each other. Lovers the world over wanted to be as free and smitten, but their great love didn't please everyone.

Elizabeth and Richard, both wed to others at the time, were denounced by the Vatican, with Elizabeth said to be guilty of "erotic vagrancy".

But not even the threat of fire and brimstone could rip the insatiable lovers apart. Their love and intensity burned so brightly it was there for all to see. The paparazzi couldn't get enough of this epic Hollywood love story.

They couldn't live without each other. He divorced his wife Sybil Williams and she ended her marriage to crooner Eddie Fisher.

"I cannot see life without Elizabeth," Richard said. "She is my everything – my breath, my blood, my mind and my imagination."

His extravagant love for her spilled over into equally extravagant gifts. Richard proposed to Elizabeth with a Bulgari pendant, platinum-set with an 18.61 carat emerald surrounded by diamonds. It could also be worn as a brooch.

It was the only piece of jewellery she wore at their wedding – nine days after her divorce from Eddie was finalised.

Their marriage was tempestuous and passionate, to say the least.

"Elizabeth and I lived on the edge of an exciting volcano," Richard noted. "I'm not easy to be married to or live with. I exploded

Elizabeth Taylor 1932-2011



violently about twice a year with Elizabeth. She would also explode. It was marvellous. But it could be murder."

He also confided to his diary: "My God she's a beauty. Sometimes even now, after eight years of marriage, I look at her when she's asleep at the first light of a grey dawn and wonder at her," he wrote.

And later in their relationship: "Our quarrels sounded like the quarrels one hears from the next room in a cheap hotel by two middle-aged people 20 years married and bored witless by each other."

In a classic case of art imitating life, Richard and Elizabeth took the frenzied energy of their marital arguments and let them explode in high drama in the 1966 movie, *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?*. Elizabeth's performance as knife-edged Martha earned her a second Academy Award for Best Actress.

Although the marriage was wild with rages, Richard still lavished his wife with gifts, buying her the famous 33.19 carat, Asscher-cut Krupp Diamond in 1968. A year later he backed that up with the 69.42, pear-shaped beauty that became known as the Taylor-Burton diamond.

The marriage ended in divorce in 1974... but nothing could quench their unbridled passion for each other. They remarried just a year later alongside a river in Africa with a hippo and rhino for a witness. Then, a year afterwards, they divorced again.

Although she married two more times, Elizabeth's heart ached for the love of her life.

Richard died from a brain haemorrhage in August 1984. His family asked Elizabeth to stay away for fear her presence would cause a media frenzy.

At the time she was asked, would she have wed him a third time if he were alive?

"It was inevitable we would be married again," she said. "But it's not up for discussion."

One thing is certain, the two lovestruck soul mates have now been reunited for eternity.



ELIZABETH'S OTHER HUSBANDS

CONRAD "NICKY" HILTON 1950-1951

"A month after our wedding I knew we'd made a mistake. I assume my share of the fault in the break-up. If I had been more mature, I could have understood many of his actions that hurt me. And I could have forgiven him."



MICHAEL WILDING 1952-1957

The couple had two sons – Michael and Christopher. "In those last few years I gave him a rather rough time. Sort of henpecked him and probably wasn't mature enough for him. It wasn't that we had anything to fight over. We just weren't happy."



MICHAEL TODD 1957-1958

They had a daughter, Elizabeth. "He was 25 years my senior [but] he was the most energetic man I've known and made our 18 months together one of the most glorious times of my life. I have had two great loves. Mike was the first."



EDDIE FISHER 1959-1964

"[Eddie] and Mike [Todd] had been friends. In hindsight, I wasn't thinking straight. I thought he needed me and I needed him. The press made much of Eddie's leaving his wife, Debbie Reynolds, but the marriage was in trouble before I hit the scene."



JOHN WARNER 1976-1982

"Our first year of marriage had been spent on the intimate, challenging high of campaigning together for one goal – his winning the [US] Senate seat. I cannot tell you how happy and proud I was of him – yes, and of myself."



LARRY FORTENSKY 1991-1996

The truck driver and construction worker was her final husband. "I always said I would get married one more time. With God's blessing, this is it, forever."





Elizabeth's unseen photos Inside her personal fa

JACQUI LANG's great-aunt was nanny to Elizabeth's first child. Jacqui shares her never-before-published photos, and tells how an Aussie nurse came to work for one of the world's biggest stars

To Melbourne nurse Yvonne Lang, Elizabeth Taylor was way more than a glamorous movie star; much to the envy of Yvonne's pals back home, she became a close personal friend.

Yvonne worked for Elizabeth as nanny to her baby son, Michael, and forged a loving bond with the star. Through Elizabeth, she got to travel in luxury and meet famous people like Ingrid Bergman, Errol Flynn and Aristotle Onassis.

So how did a quiet young mothercraft nurse from Victoria come to be part of this world?

Yvonne had gone to London in 1953, to see the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. She registered with an agency that gave her babysitting jobs.

One day, Elizabeth Taylor's assistant cabled the agency seeking a nanny to work for the star and husband number two, Michael Wilding.

Yvonne was given the job. Her task was to care for their baby, Michael Howard Wilding, while Elizabeth was making a movie in London.

The young Australian soon found herself face-to-face with the star, then only 21, newly married for the second time and, of course,

a ravishing beauty. Elizabeth was warm and friendly to the nervous young Aussie.

"Elizabeth put me at ease right away, giving me one of those huge radiant smiles when we first met," Yvonne recalled. "She was a sweet, delightful person. And she was a terrific mother; so warm and loving with her little boy."

If Elizabeth had had her way, said Yvonne, she wouldn't have needed a nanny at all. "She loved changing the nappies, nursing Michael when he cried, and being as hands-on as could be. But being a star-in-demand, she couldn't do it all."



The beautiful star at 21, with her first baby, Michael, whose dad was Elizabeth's second husband, English actor Michael Wilding.



Exclusive



Elizabeth needed a nanny as she was making a movie, but "she loved being as hands-on as could be," said Yvonne.

Family album

Elizabeth presented Yvonne with a Spanish doll, nursing an even smaller doll – representing her role as the family nanny. It was the first of many presents she would offer Yvonne, who mostly refused to accept them.

"Elizabeth was always being given lavish gifts – and she was eager to share them with others," Yvonne once told me.

"Michael Wilding – himself a kind and friendly person – once bought himself and Elizabeth matching cars. She then tried to buy a third one for me – I just couldn't accept."



Jacqui's great-aunt Yvonne Lang.

Yvonne was treated like a member of the family. On days off, she was given the use of the chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce and told to go where she pleased. The job that was to last a few days stretched into months.

Yvonne travelled with Elizabeth around Europe and the US, always staying at the finest hotels. During the making of the movie *Beau Brummell*, she lived for six months with the famous family at London's Dorchester Hotel. Here Yvonne would learn what a wicked sense of humour her boss had; she sometimes enjoyed throwing

items from her hotel window to pedestrians.

But Yvonne decided that, fun as it was, a life being around Hollywood glamour wasn't as good as being around friends and family back home. She came back in 1954, but held fond memories of her famous friend for the rest of her life.

"My husband and I and our son Michael look upon Miss Lang as part of our family," Elizabeth wrote on a note that year, which my great-aunt treasured for the rest of her life.

When Yvonne died in January 2004, she was wearing a St Christopher gold medallion on a chain, a gift from Elizabeth she'd treasured for half a century. It reads: *Dearest Yvonne, safe journeys always. God bless, love, Elizabeth.*



Bill Collins I'll never forget when we met...

There will never be another star like Elizabeth Taylor, says the many they call Mr Movies, as he looks back on her career

Elizabeth Taylor was an actress, but foremost she was a movie star.

The first time I saw her was when she played the little friend of Roddy McDowell in *The White Cliffs Of Dover*, a film I liked very much. But I think before then I knew who she was because I had seen her in *Jane Eyre*. I don't think she even got billing in that film – she plays a little girl who dies very early in the film.

Then along came *National Velvet*, and that made her a movie star. People loved it, it was enormously successful and she was absolutely delightful. She was a charming child; you couldn't help but like her.

I will never forget when I first met her. It was quite a remarkable day because it was the same day I renewed my acquaintance with Kim Novak, I met Rock Hudson, met Tony Curtis again and also met Angela Lansbury, and I still remember how unique Elizabeth Taylor was. She was uniquely beautiful and her violet eyes were just extraordinary. You knew you were looking at someone who had come from heaven almost. She was a very special looking lady.

She was a star, you can't argue about that, but whether she was a great actress, I don't think so. But you don't have to be a great actress to be a star.

I suppose there will be other great stars, and I suppose there will be some who will try to be like her, but there's only one Liz.

She was Elizabeth Taylor and she was a star... a star with a capital S.

Elizabeth Taylor 1932-2011

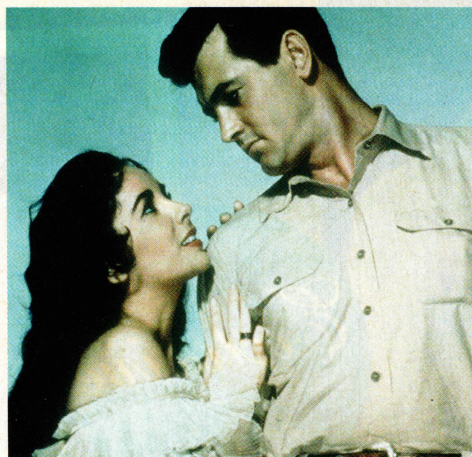
SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER 1959

With its themes of homosexuality, murder, cannibalism and insanity, this was a shocking movie for the time. Elizabeth played the crazed Catherine Holly.



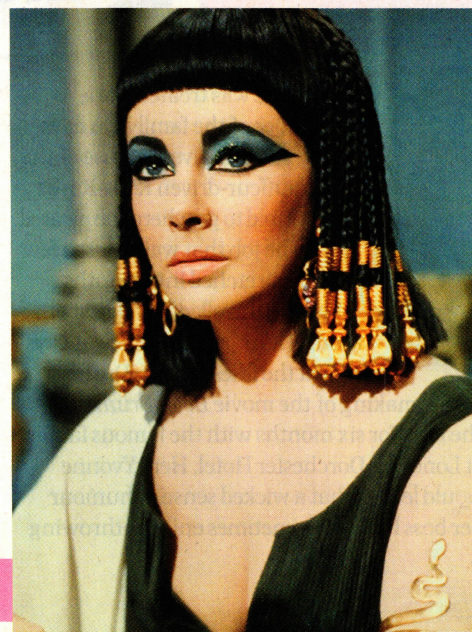
GIANT 1956

In this epic, Elizabeth starred with friends Rock Hudson (below) and James Dean.



CLEOPATRA 1963

When they met for this movie, love struck Elizabeth and Richard Burton like a lightning bolt, beginning one of the most stormy romances in Hollywood history.



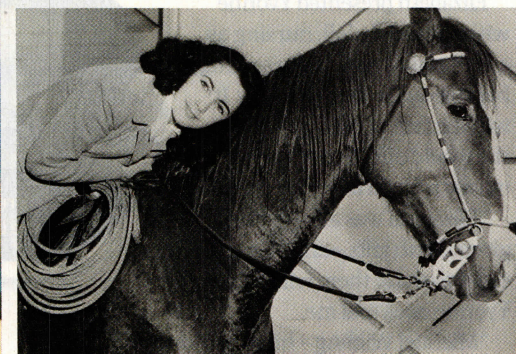
COURAGE OF LASSIE 1946

Elizabeth at 14, with Frank Morgan in the second of the much-loved Lassie films.



BEAU BRUMMELL 1954

At 21, Elizabeth starred as the aristocratic Lady Patricia Belham, opposite Stewart Granger as Beau Brummell, in this beautifully costumed story about the Regency England dandy.



NATIONAL VELVET 1944

Elizabeth played Velvet Brown in the film that rocketed her to stardom at age 12.